

# THE CHRISTIAN VISITANT.

BY A LAYMAN.

"NOCTURNA VERSATE MANU, VERSATE DIURNA."—"BE THESE YOUR STUDIES BY DAY AND BY NIGHT."

VOL. I.

ALBANY, SATURDAY, MAY 18, 1816.

No. 51.

## ESSAYS AND PARAGRAPHS, ORIGINAL AND SELECTED.

### REFLECTIONS FOR SATURDAY EVENING.

*Whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report,—  
think on these Things. Phil. iv. 8.*

THE precept which I have chosen for my motto is applicable to many particulars, which are but seldom and occasionally mentioned from the pulpit. There are improprieties of conduct, which, though usually considered as foibles that hardly deserve a severe censure, are properly sinful; for though some of them may not seem to violate any express command of Scripture, yet they are contrary to that accuracy and circumspection which become our profession. A Christian, by the tenor of his high calling, is bound to avoid even the appearance of evil; and his deportment should not only be upright as to his leading principles, but amiable and engaging, and as free as possible from every inconsistency and blemish. The characters of some valuable persons are clouded; and the influence they might otherwise have, greatly counteracted by comparatively small faults: yet faults they certainly are; and it would be well if they could be made so sensible of them, and of their ill effects, as that they might earnestly watch, and strive, and pray against them. I know not how to explain myself better than by attempting the outlines of a few portraits, to each of which I apprehend some strong resemblances may be found in real life. I do not wish to set my readers to work to find out such resemblances among their neighbours; but would advise them to examine carefully, whether they cannot, in one or other of them, discover some traces of their own features: and though I speak of men only, counterparts to the several characters may doubtless be found here and there among the women; for the imperfections and evils of a fallen nature, are equally entailed upon both sexes.

AUSTERUS is a solid and exemplary Christian. He has a deep, extensive, and experimental knowledge of divine things. Inflexibly and invariably true to his principles, he stems with a noble singularity the torrent of the world, and can neither be bribed nor intimidated from the path of duty. He is a rough diamond of great intrinsic value, and would sparkle with a distinguished lustre, if he were more polished: but though the word of God is his daily study, and he prizes the precepts, as well as the promises, more than thousands of gold and silver, there is one precept he seems to have overlooked; I mean that of the apostle, BE COURTEOUS. Instead of that gentleness and conde-

scension which will always be expected from a professed follower of the meek and lowly Jesus; there is a harshness in his manner, which makes him more admired than beloved; and they who truly love him, often feel more constraint than pleasure when in his company. His intimate friends are satisfied that he is no stranger to true humility of heart; but these are few. By others he is thought proud, dogmatic, and self-important; nor can this prejudice against him be easily removed, until he can lay aside that cynical air which he has unhappily contracted.

HUMANUS is generous and benevolent. His feelings are lively, and his expressions of them strong. No one is more distant from sordid views, or less influenced by a selfish spirit. His heart burns with love to Jesus, and he is ready to receive with open arms all who love his Saviour. Yet with an upright and friendly spirit, which entitles him to the love and esteem of all who know him, he has not every thing we would wish in a friend. In some respects, though not in the most criminal sense, he bridleth not his tongue. Should you, without witness or writing, intrust him with untold gold, you would run no risk of loss; but if you intrust him with a secret, you thereby put it in the possession of the public. Not that he would wilfully betray you, but it is his infirmity. He knows not how to keep a secret; it escapes from him before he is aware. So likewise as to matters of fact: in things which are of great importance, and where he is sufficiently informed, no man has a stricter regard to truth; but in the smaller concerns of common life, whether it be from credulity, or from a strange and blameable inadvertence, he frequently grieves and surprises those who know his real character, by saying *the thing that is not*. Thus they to whom he opens his very heart, dare not make him returns of equal confidence; and they who in some cases would venture their lives upon his word, in others are afraid of telling a story after him. How lamentable are such blemishes in such a person!

PRUDENS, though not of a generous natural temper, is a partaker of that grace which opens the heart, and inspires a disposition to love and to good works. He bestows not his alms to be seen of men; but they who have the best opportunities of knowing what he does for the relief of others, and of comparing it with his ability, can acquit him in good measure of the charge which another part of his conduct exposes him to. For Prudens is a great economist; and though he would not willingly wrong or injure any person, yet the meannesses to which he will submit, either to save or gain a penny in what he accounts an honest way, are a great discredit to his profession. He is punctual in fulfilling his engagements; but exceedingly hard, strict, and suspicious in making his bargains. And in his dress, and every article of his personal concerns, he is content to be so much below



the station in which the providence of God has placed him, that to those who are not acquainted with his private benefactions to the poor, he appears under the hateful character of a miser, and to be governed by that love of money which the Scripture declares to be the root of all evil, and inconsistent with the true love of God and of the saints.

VOLATILIS is sufficiently exact in performing his promises in such instances as he thinks of real importance. If he bids a person depend upon his assistance, he will not disappoint his expectations.—Perhaps he is equally sincere in all his promises at the time of making them; but for want of method in the management of his affairs, he is always in a hurry, always too late, and has always some engagement upon his hands with which it is impossible he can comply: yet he goes on in this way, exposing himself and others to continual disappointments. He accepts, without a thought, proposals which are incompatible with each other, and will perhaps undertake to be at two or three different and distant places at the same hour. This has been so long his practice, that nobody now expects him till they see him. In other respects he is a good sort of man; but this want of punctuality, which runs through his whole deportment, puts every thing out of course in which he is concerned, abroad and at home. Volatilis excuses himself as well as he can, and chiefly by alleging, that the things in which he fails are of no great consequence. But he would do well to remember, that truth is a sacred thing, and ought not to be violated in the smallest matters, without an unforeseen and unavoidable prevention. Such a trifling turn of spirit lessens the weight of a person's character, though he makes no pretensions to religion, and is a still greater blemish in a professor.

CESSATOR is not chargeable with being buried in the cares and business of the present life to the neglect of the one thing needful; but he greatly neglects the duties of his station. Had he been sent into the world only to read, pray, hear sermons, and join in religious conversation, he might pass for an eminent Christian. But though it is to be hoped, that his abounding in these exercises springs from a heart-attachment to divine things, his conduct evidences that his judgment is weak, and his views of his Christian calling are very narrow and defective. He does not consider, that waiting upon God in the public and private ordinances is designed, not to excuse us from the discharge of the duties of civil life, but to instruct, strengthen, and qualify us for their performance. His affairs are in disorder, and his family and connexions are likely to suffer by his indolence. He thanks God that he is not worldly-minded; but he is an idle and unfaithful member of society, and causes the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Of such the apostle has determined, that "if any man will not work, neither should he eat."

CURIOSUS is upright and unblameable in his general deportment, and no stranger to the experiences of a true Christian. His conversation upon these subjects is often satisfactory and edifying. He would be a much more agreeable companion, were it not for an impertinent desire of knowing every body's business, and the grounds of every hint that is occasionally dropped in discourse where he is present.—This puts him upon asking a multiplicity of needless and improper questions; and obliges those who know him, to be continually upon their guard, and to treat him with reserve. He catechises even strangers, and is unwilling to part with them till he is punctually informed

of all their connections, employments, and designs. For this idle curiosity he is marked and avoided as a busy-body; and they who have the best opinion of him, cannot but wonder that a man, who appears to have so many better things to employ his thoughts, should find leisure to amuse himself with what does not at all concern him.—Were it not for the rules of civility, he would be affronted every day: and if he would attend to the cold and evasive answers he receives to his inquiries, or even to the looks with which they are accompanied, he might learn, that, though he means no harm, he appears to a great disadvantage, and that this prying disposition, is very displeasing.

Other improprieties of conduct, which lessen the influence, and spot the profession of some who wish well to the cause of Christ, might be enumerated, but these may suffice for a specimen.

NEWTON.

---

### TO READERS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

CLERICUS, No. III. is received—but too late for this day.

---

### EPISTOLARY.

#### LETTERS

#### FROM BARON HALLER TO HIS DAUGHTER,

On the Truths of the Christian Religion.

---

#### LETTER IX.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, the great evidence of the truth of the Christian Religion. An appeal constantly made to this fact by the Apostles and first Christians. The nature, necessity, and propriety of our Saviour's divine mission, by his resurrection. The conduct of his disciples inexplicable upon human views or motives. The enthusiasm of the disciples of MAHOMET, and of the martyrs of JAPAN, accounted for and compared with the heroic courage and zeal of the Christian apostles and martyrs. The true source of the holy zeal that animated the disciples of Jesus Christ.

THE Resurrection of Christ himself is another striking event, designed, in a more particular manner, to convince the world that he was the Son of God. The opposite characters of debasement and dignity were never found united in one person but in the Redeemer of the world. *Jesus of Nazareth*, during the whole course of his life, appeared in a state of humiliation; and of this humiliation his death was at once the consummation and the greatest excess. As he appeared in this humble state, so, in order to fulfil the predictions of the prophets, and to correspond exactly to the description they had given of the Messiah, it was necessary that he should appear in a state of exaltation. If he had remained in the grave, the attributes of the Divinity, which were to dwell with the Messiah, could not have been recognized in him; we could not have discerned those prerogatives which were to distinguish him from other mortals; there would have been no resemblance in the portrait which the prophets had drawn of the Saviour who was to come.

We may remark, that in all the discourses of the apostles, addressed either to the Jewish people, to the Sanhedrim, or even to the Sanhedrim, or even to the Gentiles, the resurrection of our Saviour was the great argument used by them to demonstrate the Divinity of their



Master. For the inhabitants of Athens, who were not much versed in matters of religion, imagined, after they had heard St. Paul use this proof, that the resurrection was the goddess, the worship of whom he wanted to introduce. Christ himself often referred the incredulous Jews to the proof which his resurrection would furnish, when they required of him a sign from heaven to confirm his divine mission. Nay, farther, the promise which he had made of his resurrection was accommodated afterwards, not without some violence to their prejudices.

Every man who would establish his faith upon reasonable foundations ought to weigh this proof with attention; and I would earnestly recommend to him the consideration of it. Truth loses nothing by being closely examined. The proof which we have adduced will serve to confirm the divinity of our Saviour. The Jewish priests had used all imaginable precaution to prevent the body of Jesus from being stolen; for they were well acquainted with the promise which he had made in such express and positive terms, that he would rise again. It is well known that the Roman discipline was very severe and exact. A detachment of soldiers of that nation were appointed to watch the door of the sepulchre where the dead body was laid, wrapped in funeral cloaths according to the custom of the Jews, with a preparation of aromatic spices, to prevent the disagreeable effects of the cadaverous effluvia. At the entrance was placed a large stone, and to this stone was affixed the seal of the magistrate. In spite of all these precautions, the dead body was gone. We can frame no other excuse for the guards than this, that they slept, and that the disciples of Jesus, attentive to every thing which passed, took that opportunity of carrying the dead body away. This apology exposed the soldiers to a severe punishment; but they were flattered with the hopes that the martial law would, in their case, be disarmed of its rigour, by the presents which should be made to those whose duty it was to carry it into execution.

Four days after the resurrection of our Saviour, the disciples being assembled together, were summoned to appear before the Sanhedrim. They spoke also to the people in the temple. Their first and constant defence was this—That Jesus, whom they had crucified through their blindness and obstinacy, was risen from the dead. So extraordinary a miracle defeated all the designs of the Jewish council, and rendered their efforts of no avail. This defence, therefore, of the apostles, it was their interest to discredit; for, if Christ was risen, they could no longer consider his death as an event which must annihilate his new doctrines; this would rather be alledged as a convincing proof of the divinity of his mission; it would be one of the characteristics by which he would be known; and his resurrection would be another. The Messiah could not be more distinguishable than by these circumstances—that, after he had suffered for our offences, he rose again, and was raised by God to partake of his eternal glory. But the means employed by the council (who were by no means destitute of sagacity) were but badly calculated to accomplish the ends they proposed; none of their actions seemed to be dictated by common prudence. They did not publicly and solemnly accuse the apostles of propagating a falsehood; they did not examine closely and judicially the depositions of the soldiers; they did not invite the people to see the dead body of Jesus; which, if risen, must have

appeared with a countenance more than human; but, if he was an impostor, must have been still in the grave. The council perceived the boldness and intrepidity of the apostles; they saw the attachment of the people to them; and, that the number of those who acknowledged him for the Messiah, was much greater than when he was alive, and displayed his miracles amongst them. Their honour was at stake; they, therefore, used every method in their power to exculpate themselves from the accusation that they had put to death an innocent man. For if they could not disprove the reality of the resurrection, it was no longer one of the common people whom they had unjustly accused, but it was the Son of God, and the Saviour of Israel, whom they had murdered.

The principal men amongst the Jews could not but see that the new converts to Christianity, whose numbers daily increased, had abandoned the religion of the murderers of a Master whom they had esteemed and honoured as a divine person; and had formed themselves into a powerful sect, who despised their dignity, and despoiled them of the privileges which they had enjoyed, and of the title they had assumed of heads and rulers of the church.

It would have been an easy matter for them to have justified themselves, if the resurrection of our Saviour had not been real. There were living witnesses to whom they might have appealed in respect to the part they bore in the transaction; as they were present, and were able to have given an accurate and unsophisticated relation of what they saw. The large stone which had been rolled to the door of the sepulchre, must have been sufficient to have secured the dead body in the place where it had been laid. There were also witnesses of the actions of Jesus then living, to whom they might have appealed for information; and, if the miracles reported of him had been false, they might easily have been detected.

None of these prudential precautions, however, were taken. The chief priests enjoined the apostles silence; this was the only means of justification adopted by the council. But the apostles chose rather to obey God than man. They continued to preach and to affirm, that God had raised from the dead that Jesus whom they had crucified, and had taken him up into heaven.

Whence were the apostles animated with so great courage? They who had before discovered such marks of timidity as to betake themselves to a shameful flight when the enemies of their master came to apprehend him?—when the most resolute amongst them at the approach of danger, had the weakness to deny that he knew this Galilean? In this time of peril they betrayed a cowardice which can hardly be excused; they forsook that master whose miracles they had seen, whose doctrine, having for a long time heard, they esteemed as divine, and whose power, so superior to the laws of nature, they had so often admired.

After his death, his disciples would have denied him, if that death had not been followed by a resurrection. Without this last circumstance, no credit would have been given to what he had said. His disciples would no longer have cherished the hopes of a second and glorious appearance of their master. They would no longer have expected a part either of his kingdom, or of the salvation he was to procure for his people, or of those blessings which he was to dispense. They must have been obliged, with sorrow and confusion, to confess



that they had been deceived, and to return to their former occupation of fishing. Such is the conduct which they must have been determined to follow, by the common dispositions and feelings of human nature. And by this conduct they might naturally hope to escape that punishment they had reason to apprehend for conceiving the horrid design of publishing a falsehood which they perfectly knew to be such. For what could be more absurd, or contrary to common sense, than to expose one's life in order to persuade the world that a man was the son of God, whose death witnessed the contrary?—who usurped the title of Messiah, and suffered himself to be honored as such, though it must be necessarily known that he was not the promised Saviour!

The mortification alone of being so cruelly duped, must have been sufficient to have caused in the minds of the apostles, a detestation of the memory of him whom they had regarded as the Son of God—who had imposed himself on them as the promised Messiah, but who was not the person he pretended to be. They had, besides, other more urgent motives to induce them to withdraw themselves from him, or to deny that they had been his disciples. Their master was delivered up to the Jewish council without making any resistance—was reduced to the lowest state of ignominy, and suffered a shameful death. What could the disciples expect, but cruel persecutions—the hatred of those whom their master could not oppose, and, in a word, misery and misfortunes of the worst kind? It appears, that in the whole course of their life, they sought no temporal recompense; and how could they expect it, when they persevered in their design of supporting an impostor? The secular arm was against them; and they must have been convinced in their own conscience, that they were labouring for the glory of a man, whom the world knew, and they themselves could not but confess, was not he who was promised. By what means could they have gained proselytes to a man who so little merited esteem and respect?

Certain it is, that their actions were different from the ordinary conduct of mankind; neither did they seem to be directed by those passions and inclinations which have reigned in all hearts, in all times, and in all countries.—*This Jesus, whom ye have crucified, is the Son of David, the anointed of the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel.* This they boldly dared to assert, in the midst of priests armed with church authority—in the midst of a multitude of people who had seen Jesus expire, and who believed as a certain truth, for which they had the testimony of their own eyes, that he was only mere man. Whence proceeded that heroic firmness which never abandoned the ministers of our Saviour, and which, in the midst of a shower of stones, shone with triumphant brightness in the countenance of St. Stephen? Whence that undaunted intrepidity, which the first preachers of the gospel carried with them before the tribunal of emperors, before kings, amongst the most enlightened nations, and in all parts of the world? which spirit of fortitude they preserved, without diminution, for many years, even to the end of their ministry.

I am aware, that, in all times, men of warm temperament, and zealously attached to any favorite doctrine, have maintained it with invincible courage, and have laid down their lives in support of it though the doctrine was, in fact, erroneous. This idea occurred to me, from considering the conduct of the followers of Mahomet; who,

inflamed with zeal, have spread his doctrine from place to place, not intimidated by the prospect of death to which they were exposed in the accomplishment of their grand design.

To these I might add the martyrs of Japan, who suffered death with great resolution, for a kind of Christianity that they professed, which, at least, amongst the greatest part of them, may be called prejudice or infatuation; because none of those numerous believers knew the scriptures, though they seemed to die in defence of a doctrine which was there taught.

This enthusiasm, I must confess, is no proof of the truth of those dogmas, for which their advocates are inspired with such ardent zeal. Though it must be allowed, that the doctrines for which the martyrs already mentioned so earnestly contended, were not unmixed with truth; and it was principally these truths which kindled that zeal which rendered so conspicuous the disciples of Mahomet, as well as the inhabitants of Japan. The former acknowledged the unity of God, in opposition to the polytheism of the heathens; and though the doctrines they received were human, they had, however, the effect of disposing them to reverence the true Saviour.

But there is an essential difference betwixt this kind of martyrs and those who, at the price of their blood, rendered themselves a testimony of the divinity of Christ. The Japanese suffered for a system which was taught him, but of the truth of which he had no other proof than the confidence which he placed in his instructors; who were not, however, witnesses of the facts which they maintained.—His death had not proved that Jesus Christ was crucified more than a thousand years before, in Palestine, and that he was truly the Saviour of the world. The Japanese had been only informed of these things; he had not seen them; he had not compared the writings of the prophets with those of the apostles, neither had he weighed the fact resulting from it, that Jesus was of a truth the Saviour of men. This he had been simply told, and upon no other evidence he believed it: and as it is the custom of that people never to temporize on account of any violence employed against them, this but the more confirmed him in his persuasion; because his persecutors, instead of endeavouring to convince him by argument, attempted to terrify him by menaces and punishments.

The Japanese might be a man of honour, though his faith might be erroneous.—With respect to the apostles of our Saviour, one of these two things must be admitted; either that their testimony is true, or that they were remarkable impostors. If the miracles attributed to Jesus were not really done; if it is not true that he rose again; if, however, the apostles affirmed these two things, they must then be regarded as deceivers and false teachers, who spoke of facts which they affirm to have seen, though they were not susceptible of illusion, nor were their senses liable to be imposed upon. They declared that they had seen a dead man raised from the grave; had conversed with their master several days after he was risen; had seen him many times after he had been three days in the sepulchre; had touched him; had heard him speak; had received his orders and instructions, and were with him at the very time when he ascended into heaven. All these circumstances were subject to the examination of the senses; they could therefore judge of them with certainty. If, then, the apostles had not seen these things, or any resemblance



of them, they cannot be considered as enthusiasts actuated with a good design. They were, I again repeat it, detestable impostors, who deserve the contempt of mankind for presuming to assert as a truth what they were well convinced was false.

But to return to the question which I have already proposed.—Whence proceeded that heroic courage which stimulated men so timorous, so much attached to the present life and its advantages, to announce Jesus as the Saviour of the world; and even in the presence of his murderers, after that his death had positively decided this point so much to his disadvantage, and had seemingly removed every appearance of doubt? We can assign no other reason but this—They had actually seen him before his death perform many miracles, and after his death rise again. The power of God, which extends even to the dead, shone so conspicuously in Christ, that they could not but perceive in him all the traces of the promised Messiah. His apostles were perfectly satisfied, from the testimony of their own senses, and the conviction of their own minds, that Jesus was the Son of God. They could not, therefore, disavow it, or deny what they were well persuaded was true. This it was which made them seek death with a kind of impatience, that they might meet their benevolent master, and receive from him the recompense of their labours. Neither the hatred which they incurred, the persecution which they suffered, nor death itself could separate them from him whom they esteemed as divine.

The frequent conversations which they had with him, after his resurrection, dissipated all their doubts, and wrought in the minds of the apostles a persuasion so perfect and entire, that Thomas addressed himself in terms which none of the rest had yet employed—*My Lord and my God!* This would have been saying too much to man, if he had not triumphed over death. But Christ suffered him to make use of this language, even praised him for it, and considered it as an instance of his faith, that he had called him not only *God*, but *his God*. This remark will serve as an answer to the inference drawn by those persons who have collected from the gospel all the passages where Jesus Christ, during the time of his humiliation, appears to be inferior to the Father.

At present there is evidently a perfect connexion in the history which the apostles have given of Christ. They announce to the world the glory and elevation of the promised Messiah, whom they had seen from the beginning, and in every stage of his life. He was not only a teacher sent from God, but one who performed such works as were contrary to the ordinary course of nature. These two circumstances had no other effect upon the apostles at first, than to convince them that he was the prophet which God had promised to his people. But at the time of his sufferings, and of his death, their faith was strangely staggered. "We hoped," said they, sorrowfully, that "this was HE who should have re-established the kingdom of Israel."—At this moment of fear and apprehension, Christ appeared again alive. This resurrection removed every doubt. They saw in him the glory of an uncreated being; they acknowledged him to be their God; they lived for him, and for him they consented to die. This conviction, which God, who had appeared to them, and whom they had seen, had operated in their minds; this irresistible conviction, I say, conducted also to the conversion of the world.

The Jews, who, by their seditious humours, had obliged the judge to pass sentence of condemnation against Jesus—those Jews, who, at the time of his death, insulted the apostles with the bitterest raileries, fell at his feet a few days afterwards, and at the feet of those men whom they had so much despised. They entreated the disciples to make known to them the way of eternal life.—"Men and brethren," said they, "what shall we do to be saved?"—The important instructions they received on this occasion were not delivered from the seat of Moses; nor by men authorised to teach, as being the successors of the prophets; nor by a Gamaliel, highly respected and esteemed as the oracle of the people; but by the obscure followers of Christ, who had attended him the whole time of his ministry, had learned his doctrines, and been enlightened by his divine lessons.

Here, then, is displayed the power of that conviction, which according to the promise of our Saviour, inspired a small number of laymen, whose minds had never been cultivated by education, with the most exalted fortitude. It was this which gave them so eminent a superiority over the philosophers and great personages of that age: and at last confounded and put to silence every effort of human wisdom. This same spirit appeared afterwards, in a most remarkable manner, in St. Paul. The zeal with which he was inflamed enabled him to make some impression upon a Pagan king of a debauched and vicious life; who, when he had heard him, and was moved by the thunder of his eloquence, ascribed it to a deprivation of reason.

It was this conviction which produced in the disciples of Jesus a contempt of death; and, under the daily expectation of martyrdom, enabled them to contemplate their approaching end with cheerfulness and joy. This effect may be also ascribed to the longing hope and desire they entertained of being with Christ, whose sanctity they had seen, and whose miracles they had admired. If the greatness which they attributed to him was an imposition, or the consequence of a disordered imagination, what could be their expectations from men in dying for him? Would not the dread of punishment have induced them to put off the mask? Could they, in the midst of that astonishment and repentance which now filled their troubled minds, have beheld, without fear, the preparations for a death which they justly merited, by presuming to publish false miracles, in order to impose on the world? Yet their writings breathe nothing but constancy, resolution, and tranquillity, at the very time when they were surrounded by the horrors of death. They spoke of their departure, and of other circumstances relative to their approaching end, with a calmness and serenity of soul, not to be changed by any impending danger; they triumphed in the midst of the severest tortures.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### RHODE-ISLAND.

PROVIDENCE, April 30, 1816.

#### ORDINATION.

At Trinity Church, in Newport, on Thursday last, the Rev. JOHN L. BLAKE was admitted to the Holy Order of Priesthood. Divine service was performed by the Rev. Mr. Crocker; and the Sermon by the Right Rev. Bishop Griswold, from John xx. 21, 22, 23.



## DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

## AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY.

On the 8th inst. a Convention of Delegates from the different Bible Societies in the United States, was held in the city of New-York, for the purpose of establishing a NATIONAL SOCIETY. The proceedings, at full length, were handed to us by an obliging correspondent, but too late for this evening's VISITANT. By an extra exertion, however, we are enabled to present the ADDRESS which follows; and in our next shall give the incipient measures which preceded the Address.

We have only time and room to thank our Correspondent for his politeness, and to assure him, that we shall feel grateful to him for any communications with which he may hereafter be good enough to favour us.

TO THE

## PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.

EVERY person of observation has remarked that the times are pregnant with great events. The political world has undergone changes stupendous, unexpected, and calculated to inspire thoughtful men with the most boding anticipations.

That there are in reserve, occurrences of deep, of lasting, and of general interest, appears to be the common sentiment. Such a sentiment has not been excited without a cause, and does not exist without an object. The cause is to be sought in that Providence which adapts, with wonderful exactitude, means to ends; and the object is too plain to be mistaken by those who carry a sense of religion into their speculations upon the present and the future condition of our afflicted race.

An excitement, as extraordinary as it is powerful, has roused the nations to the importance of spreading the knowledge of the one living and true God, as revealed in his Son, the Mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus. This excitement is the more worthy of notice, as it has followed a period of philosophy, falsely so called, and has gone in the track of those very schemes, which, under the imposing names of reason and liberality, were attempting to seduce mankind from all which can bless the life that is, or shed a cheering radiance on the life that is to come.

We hail the re-action, as auspicious to whatever is exquisite in human enjoyment, or precious to human hope. We would fly to the aid of all that is holy, against all that is profane; of the purest interest of the community, the family, and the individual, against the conspiracy of darkness, disaster, and death—to help on the mighty work of Christian charity—to claim our place in the age of Bibles.

We have, indeed, the secondary praise, but still the praise, of treading in the footsteps of those who have set an example without a parallel—an example of the most unbounded benevolence and beneficence: And it cannot be to us a source of any pain, that it has been set by those who are of one blood with the most of ourselves; and has been embodied in a form so noble and so Catholic, as "*The British and Foreign Bible Society*."

The impulse which that institution, ten thousand times more glorious than all the exploits of the sword, has given to the conscience of Europe, and to the slumbering hope of millions in the region and shadow of death, demonstrates to Christians of every country what they cannot do by insulated zeal; and what they can do by co-operation.

In the United States we want nothing but concert to perform achievements astonishing to ourselves, dismaying to the adversaries of truth and piety; and most encouraging to every evangelical effort, on the surface of the globe.

No spectacle can be so illustrious in itself, so touching to man, or so grateful to God, as a nation pouring forth its devotion, its talent, and its treasures, for that kingdom of the Saviour which is righteousness and peace.

If there be a single measure which can overrule objection, subdue opposition, and command exertion, this is the measure. That all our voices, all our affections, all our hands, should be joined in the grand design of promoting "peace on earth and good will toward man"—that they should resist the advance of misery—should carry the light of instruction into the dominions of ignorance; and the balm of joy to the soul of anguish; and all this by diffusing the oracles of God—addresses to the understanding, an argument which cannot be encountered; and to the heart an appeal which its holiest emotions rise up to second.

Under such impressions, and with such views, fathers, brethren, fellow-citizens, the *American Bible Society* has been formed. Local feelings, party prejudices, sectarian jealousies, are excluded by its very nature. Its members are leagued in that, and in that alone, which calls up every hallowed, and puts down every unhallowed, principle—the dissemination of the Scriptures in the received versions where they exist, and in the most faithful where they may be required. In such a work, whatever is dignified, kind, venerable, true, has ample scope: while sectarian littleness and rivalries can find no avenue of admission.

The only question is, whether an object of such undisputed magnitude can be best attained by a National Society, or by independent associations in friendly understanding and correspondence.

Without entering into the details of this inquiry, we may be permitted to state, in a few words, our reasons of preference to a National Society supported by lo-



cal Societies, and by individuals throughout our country.

Concentrated action is powerful action. The same powers, when applied by a common direction, will produce results impossible to their divided and partial exercise. A national object unites national feeling and concurrence. Unity of a great system combines energy of effect with economy of means. Accumulated intelligence interests and animates the public mind: And the Catholick efforts of a country, thus harmonized, give her a place in the moral convention of the world; and enable her to act directly upon the universal plans of happiness which are now pervading the nations.

It is true, that the prodigious territory of the United States—the increase of their population, which is gaining every day upon their moral cultivation—and the dreadful consequences which will ensue from a people's outgrowing the knowledge of eternal life; and reverting to a species of heathenism, which shall have all the address and profligacy of civilized society, without any religious control, present a sphere of action, which may for a long time employ and engross the cares of this Society, and of all the local Bible Societies of the land.

In the distinct anticipation of such an urgency, one of the main objects of the *American Bible Society*, is, not merely to provide a sufficiency of well printed and accurate editions of the Scriptures; but also to furnish great districts of the American continent with well executed Stereotype plates, for their cheap and extensive diffusion throughout regions which are now scantily supplied, at a discouraging expense; and which, nevertheless, open a wide and prepared field for the reception of revealed truth.

Yet, let it not be supposed, that geographical or political limits are to be the limits of the *American Bible Society*. That designation is meant to indicate, not the restriction of their labour, but the source of its emanation. They will embrace, with thankfulness and pleasure, every opportunity of raying out, by means of the Bible, according to their ability, the light of life and immortality, to such parts of the world, as are destitute of the blessing, and are within their reach. In this high vocation, their ambition is to be fellow-workers with them who are fellow-workers with God.

#### *People of the United States!*

Have you ever been invited to an enterprize of such grandeur and glory? Do you not value the Holy Scriptures? Value them as containing your sweetest hope; your most thrilling joy? Can you submit to the thought that *you* should be torpid in your endeavours to disperse them, while the rest of Christendom is awake and alert? Shall *you* hang back, in heartless indifference, when Princes come down from their thrones, to bless the cottage of the poor with the gospel of peace; and

Imperial Sovereigns are gathering their fairest honours from spreading abroad the oracles of the Lord your God? Is it possible that *you* should not see, in this state of human things, a mighty motion of Divine Providence? The most Heavenly charity treads close upon the march of conflict and blood! The world is at peace! Scarce has the soldier time to unbind his helmet, and to wipe away the sweat from his brow, ere the voice of mercy succeeds to the clarion of battle, and calls the nations from enmity to love!—Crowned heads bow to the head which is to wear "many crowns;" and, for the first time since the promulgation of Christianity, appear to act in unison for the recognition of its gracious principles, as being fraught alike with happiness to man, and honour to God.

What has created so strange, so beneficent an alteration? This is no doubt the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes. But what instrument has he thought fit chiefly to use? That which contributes, in all latitudes and climes, to make Christians feel their unity, to rebuke the spirit of strife, and to open upon them the day of brotherly concord—the Bible! the Bible!—through Bible Societies!

Come, then; fellow-citizens, fellow-Christians, let us join in the sacred covenant. Let no heart be cold; no hand be idle; no purse reluctant!—Come, while room is left for us in the ranks whose toil is goodness, and whose recompense is victory. Come cheerfully, eagerly, generally. Be it impressed on your souls, that a contribution, saved even from a cheap indulgence, may send a Bible to a desolate family; may become a radiatory point of "grace and truth" to a neighborhood of error and vice; and that a number of such contributions made at really no expense, may illumine a large tract of country, and successive generations of immortals, in that celestial knowledge, which shall secure their present and their future felicity.

But whatever be the proportion between expectation and experience, thus much is certain: We shall satisfy our conviction of duty—we shall have the praise of high endeavors for the highest ends—we shall minister to the blessedness of thousands, and tens of thousands, of whom we may never see the faces, nor hear the names. We shall set forward a system of happiness which will go on with accelerated motion and augmented vigour, after we shall have finished our career; and confer upon our children, and our children's children, the delight of seeing the wilderness turned into a fruitful field, by the blessing of God upon that seed which their fathers sowed, and themselves watered. In fine we shall do our part toward that expansion and intensity of light divine, which shall visit, in its progress, the palaces of the great, and the hamlets of the small, until the whole "earth be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea."



## INTELLIGENCE FROM ABROAD.

## NORTH CAROLINA.

RALEIGH, April 19, 1816.

It was accidentally omitted last week to notice the meeting of the Presbytery in this city, which terminated its session on Monday week last. The business and proceedings of the Presbytery, other than what casually fell under observation, I am unacquainted with; eight or ten young gentlemen were examined as Candidates for the probationary studies of Divinity, or for immediate entrance upon the ministry, and gave satisfactory evidence of piety and learning; of learning, for the examination of those who were not college graduates extended to the whole circle of Collegiate studies. Many of the preachers who addressed the public during the three or four days they remained here appeared to much advantage as orators and evangelical Ministers. I can only speak of those I happened to hear. Dr. Freeman, of Murfreesborough, in this State, and Mr. Flint, of the State of Vermont, attracted particular notice. The Sacrament was administered, on which occasion several members was added to the Church.

[Star.]

## CONNECTICUT.

NEW-HAVEN, May 7

On the 17th and 18th ult. a number of Ladies belonging to Woodbridge, (First Society,) met at Rev. Mr. ALLEN's according to an invitation previously given by Mrs. Allen, and expressed their friendship for the heathen, by bringing a donation, consisting of cash, yarn, and other articles, which, together with what has since been contributed, amounts to about \$30. The yarn is to be manufactured into cloth, the avails of the whole to be given to the Bible Society. Presents almost equal in value to the expense of the entertainment, were brought to Mrs. Allen by the company, who also assisted in making the necessary preparations. It is worthy of notice, that, on the second day, several young gentlemen came and brought their free-will offering. While the affluent, from their abundance, were contributing richer materials for the Gospel tabernacle, it was pleasing to witness the cheerfulness with which those "*wise hearted women*," who were destitute of silver and gold, "*did spin with their hands, and bring that which they had spun*," for the same glorious purpose. The benevolent object which the ladies had in view, naturally led to such conversation and reading on the occasion, as were calculated to awaken new desires to promote the diffusion of Christian knowledge. Before the ladies separated Mr. Allen, at their request, addressed the Throne of Grace for a blessing on their attempt to extend the circulation of the sacred volume.

## POETICAL DEPARTMENT.

## SELECTED.

The following lines were from the pen of Michael Bruce, a native of Scotland, who died in the 21st year of his age, of a consumption.

Now Spring returns: but not to me returns  
The vernal joy my better years have known;  
Dim in my breast life's dying taper burns,  
And all the joys of life with health are flown.

Starting and shivering in the inconstant wind,  
Meagre and pale, the ghost of what I was,  
Beneath some blasted tree I lie reclined,  
And count the silent moments as they pass;

The winged moments, whose unstaying speed  
No art can stop, or in their course arrest;  
Whose flight shall shortly count me with the dead,  
And lay me down in peace with them that rest.

Oft morning dreams presage approaching fate;  
And morning dreams, as poets tell, are true.  
Led by pale ghosts, I enter death's dark gate,  
And bid the realms of light and life adieu!

I hear the helpless wail, the shriek of woe:  
I see the muddy wave, the dreary shore,

The sluggish streams that slowly creep below,  
Which mortals visit, and return no more.

Farewell, ye blooming fields! ye cheerful plains!  
Enough for me the church-yard's lonely mound,  
Where melancholy with still silence reigns,  
And the rank grass waves o'er the cheerless ground.

There let me wander at the close of eve,  
When sleep sits dewy on the labourer's eyes,  
The world and all its busy follies leave,  
And talk with wisdom where my Daphnis lies.

There let me sleep forgotten in the clay,  
When death shall shut these weary, aching eyes,  
Rest in the hopes of an eternal day,  
Till the long night is gone and the last morn arise.

[The following lines were sung at the anniversary of the Boston Asylum for Orphan Boys, 1816.]

## ODE.

BY A LADY.

BEHOLD, O God! this little band  
Who in thy courts appear,  
And fill their tender grateful hearts  
With reverence, love and fear.

Rescued from vice, from want, from woe,  
Thy mercy open'd wide  
A blest Asylum from despair,  
And bid us there abide.

Within those walls, our minds once dead  
To virtue, truth and love,  
Have learned to hate the paths of sin,  
And seek the joys above.

Our morning vows, our evening praise  
With constancy we bring;  
And now our trembling—bursting hearts  
Thy matchless mercies sing.

Benignant God! thy servants bless,  
Whose hearts Thou hast inclin'd  
To save our bodies from distress,  
And purify the mind.

O may our future, useful lives  
Unceasingly attest,  
The happy influence of those gifts,  
With which we now are blest.

Great Saviour, who, when here on earth,  
Thy kindness didst express,  
To little children at thy feet,  
Who came for thee to bless.

O look with pity, look on us,  
Who now thy blessing crave,  
Our sins forgive, our souls refine,  
And show thy power to save.

Point us to mansions in the sky  
Where want nor sorrows come;  
And in that blest Asylum plac'd,  
Thy Heaven shall be our home.